



City Manager's sustainability and energy topic: garbage and recycling

Beginning January 1, 2015, the city of Mankato, in partnership with the city of North Mankato, will implement a new garbage and recycling program. A benefit of this program is single-sort recycling where all recyclables can be placed in a single cart. A goal is to reduce the waste line by significantly increasing recycling because it makes sense. In addition, the hauler (West Central Sanitation) uses a clean fuel—compressed natural gas—in their vehicles, which aligns with the city's sustainability efforts.

Why does it make sense to recycle more? First, it's easy. Residents will be provided with a 95-gallon, wheeled recycling cart with a lid. Simple throw all recyclables into one container. Next, there's the environmental benefit. By increasing recycling, residents can help decrease what ends up in the landfill. Plus, recyclables are made into different products that can be used again. Since disposing of recyclable materials costs three times less than disposing of garbage, recycling helps keep service delivery costs lower.



Although curbside garbage and recycling is not new, the element of single-sort recycling in Mankato is. While Mankato will soon be launching its new garbage and single-sort recycling program, the city has made significant strides in its recycling efforts. There are many ways Mankato recycles:

Reclaimed water reused in a variety of ways

Mankato is a state leader in wastewater treatment efforts. The city's partnership with Mankato Energy Center helps reduce reliance on deep wells and saves the city about 385 million gallons of water per year and a cost savings of \$1.5 million per year. In the environment benefits because an extremely low phosphorous is discharged into the Minnesota River. Since water is treated to a higher level, it is recognized as high quality effluent and can be used in other ways:

- ◆ as part of the wastewater treatment process (saves about \$875,000 each year)
- ◆ in city parks and green spaces (saves more than \$3,200 year)
- ◆ for street sweeping and other uses (saves more than \$2,500 a year)

Biosolids reused as fertilizer for farmer's fields

The city of Mankato generates biosolids, a nutrient-rich organic matter, a byproduct of its wastewater treatment efforts. When biosolids are treated and processed, they can be recycled and applied as a fertilizer by local farmers to improve and maintain productive soils and stimulate plant growth.

Biosolids are injected into the soil, which helps ensure they are absorbed into the ground, keeping nutrients in the soil. Mankato's biosolids program is recognized nationally as the first city in Minnesota and 28th in the nation to earn national biosolids partnership certification.



Recycled trees, leaves and compost

Branches from tree trimming and leaves and trees collected during leaf pick-up and Christmas tree recycling are recycled to be used as mulch. Residents are encouraged to compost either at home or by using the SMC compost site (no charge to Mankato residents), 57032 231st Lane, Mankato.



Leaves collected during leaf pick-up are recycled as mulch.

De-icing efforts include re-used seal coat chips

Mankato's de-icing efforts include the re-use of seal coat chips recycled from street projects. The chips are combined with salt to help provide more traction to vehicles to help enhance road safety. Adding seal coat chips to the salt mixture also means less salt is needed. When street sweeping begins, seal coat chips are removed.



A Mankato street sweeper cleaning a city street.

Street sweeping provides cover for local landfill

Mankato's street sweepers clean up the sand, salt and other debris left from the winter. The items cleaned by the street sweepers are taken to the county landfill to be used as cover, which helps prevent garbage from blowing around.

Construction materials reused for building projects

When building, remodeling, or tearing down a building, the city looks for opportunities to recycle any construction materials to help keep them out of the landfill. Two of Mankato's most recent building projects earned Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. The Public Safety Center earned LEED® Gold certification and Orness Plaza achieved earned LEED® Silver certification. Reclaimed and recycled construction materials were used during the building's remodel as much as possible, such as roofs, floors existing walls. A unique feature at the Public Safety Center is the second floor railing because they are made of reused jail bars.



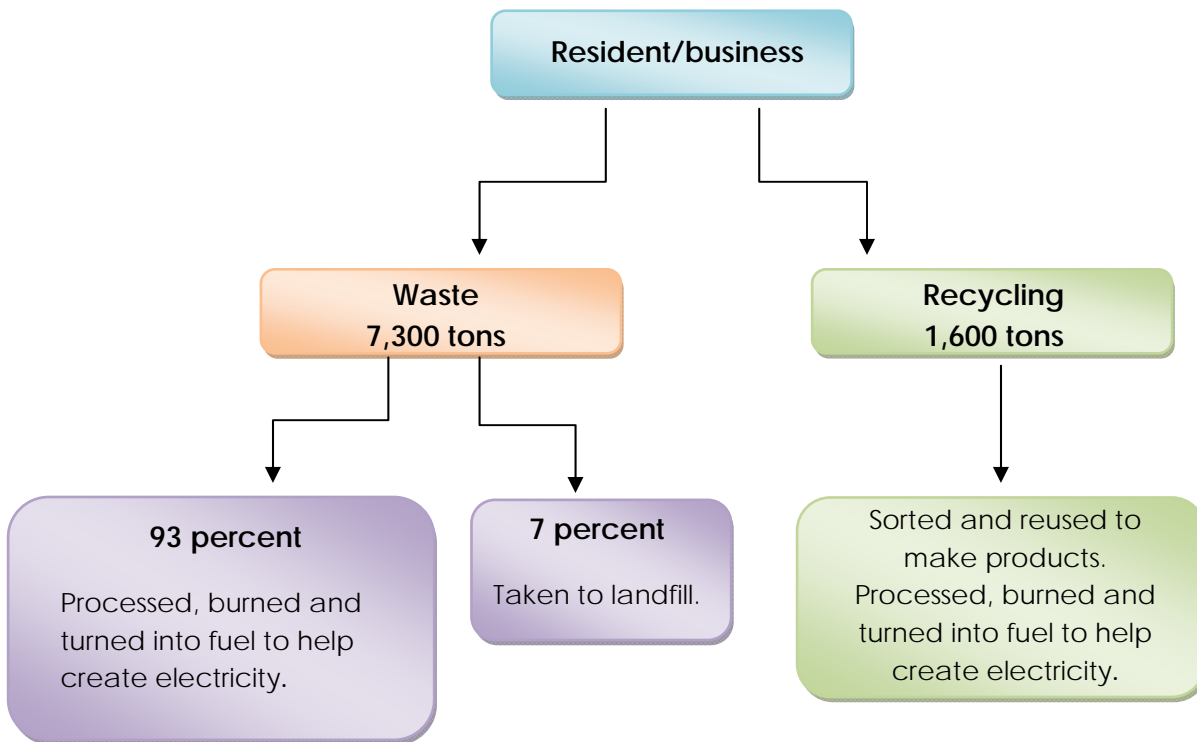
Public Safety Center, 710 South Front Street

Many types of construction materials can be repurposed, such as concrete; steel and other metals; pallets; and packaging and paper products. It's also an option for residents to bring construction materials to the Pilgrim Landfill, 3600 Northern Avenue, Mankato.

Private industry does its part

The private sector has also put much effort toward recycling. Items such as cardboard, pallets, tires end are recycled, to significantly reduce the waste stream. Food businesses have found opportunities to reuse leftovers as animal feed, which benefits agriculture and the environment.

How the residential waste stream in Mankato is impacted



Please contact me at 507-387-8695 or phentges@city.mankato.mn.us with ideas and input, or anytime I can be of service.